Chapter Four
Recommendations

Land Use and Zoning

Urban Design

Transportation

Environment

Housing

Economic Development

DRAFT

This section includes recommendations for Simpson corridor study areas. Based on the analysis of existing conditions and public input gathered thought the public planning process, the recommendations set directions for the future character of the study area and provide policies and actions from both short and long term aspects. They also support the goals and objective identified in the earlier chapter.

The recommendations are the results of consensus building among residents, businesses, property owners, neighborhoods, City and other public agencies. They are visionary yet achievable blueprint that reflect the study area's history, natural and social environment, neighborhood character, development and redevelopment potential. Overall, the recommendations are sensitive to the interactive relationship between land use and transportation, and address the essential need for economic development in the study area through:

- Improving traffic operations and within the context of surrounding City and regional traffic networks
- Providing multiple choices on transportation modes based on existing and proposed initiatives including Beltline, City wide Bicycle and Trails plans
- Balancing the needs for protecting sound single-family residential neighborhoods and facilitate development and redevelopment at appropriate locations
- Establishing different level of mixed-use, pedestrian oriented activity nodes to serve the surrounding neighborhoods and a broader community in west Atlanta.
- Linking and providing the area with the basic tools and programs for economic development.

Since the eastern portion of the Simpson corridor has been essentially addressed in several recent adopted plans (Vine City Redevelopment Plan, Upper Westside LCI, and Northside Drive Corridor Study), this study will follow and make no changes to all the previous recommendations. Also, the English Avenue neighborhood is conducting a redevelopment plan concurrently with the Simpson Plan update, so the eastern portion of Simpson located in the English Avenue neighborhood will not be addressed in this Plan update. However, land use recommendations from the ongoing English Ave Redevelopment Plan will be presented in the land use recommendation section as a reference.

The recommendations are organized in terms of Land Use and Zoning, Urban Design and Historic Resources, Transportation, Environmental, Economic Development, and Housing. These recommendations are further translated into projects and action items in Chapter 5 to guide implementation.

1. Land use and zoning recommendations

The whole stretch of Simpson Road/Street is bounded by stable historic neighborhoods which are dominated by single-family residences, although significant amount of properties abutting the Simpson corridor are dilapidated or underdeveloped. From the west (H. E, Holmes Drive) to the east (Northside Drive), the character along the corridor transforms from mostly single used suburban outlook to a more urbanized mixed-use pattern. Land use recommendations are sensitive to this historic context and intend to preserve and enhance characters of the corridor.

Land use policies

- Protect the single-family residential neighborhood from the encroaching of high density and intensity development.

- Encourage appropriate infill development that respects to the existing neighborhood characters.
  These areas include the bedroom neighborhoods located on the backside of Simpson Corridor and two major sections directly abutting the corridor – Most areas from

H.E. Holmes Drive to Westlake Avenue, and from Temple Street to Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard.

- Cluster development at major activity nodes that serve the community at different levels.
- Promote mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development at activity nodes:
  Activity nodes serve surrounding neighborhoods:
  - New Jersey Avenue
  - Anderson Avenue
  - James P. Brawley Drive (Identified in English Avenue Plan)

  Activity nodes serve broader community:
  - H. E. Holmes Drive
  - Westlake Avenue
  - Joseph E. Lowery Blvd.
  - Northside Drive

  Transit Oriented Development (TOD) node:
  - Beltline

- To facilitate redevelopment opportunities at different node and preserve the neighborhood character, the building height requirements are recommended as follows:
  - Limit building height to 40 feet (3 stories) at the following location along the corridor:
    - Neighborhood commercial/residential at New Jersey Avenue and Anderson Avenue
    - Commercial/mixed-use/residential development at Westlake Avenue and Woodlawn Avenue
  - Limit building height to 52 feet (4 stories) at the following location along the corridor:
    - Multifamily residential in Woodlawn Avenue area.
    - Beltline redevelopment area which is on the south side of Simpson Road
    - Commercial/mixed use at Northwestern corner of Joseph E. Lowery Blvd.
  - Limit building height to 88 feet for the beltline redevelopment area north of Simpson Road, basically from Woodlawn Avenue to Temple Street.

- Reconcile the discrepancies between land use and zoning designations
  The current15 year land use and existing zoning code are not 100% consistent at this time. At the same time of proposing changes, the discrepancies will be corrected.

Figures 4.1 to 4.3 illustrate the land use policy recommendations, which are translated into Land Use change recommendations showed in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4. 1 Land Use Policy – H. E. Holmes Drive to Anderson Avenue

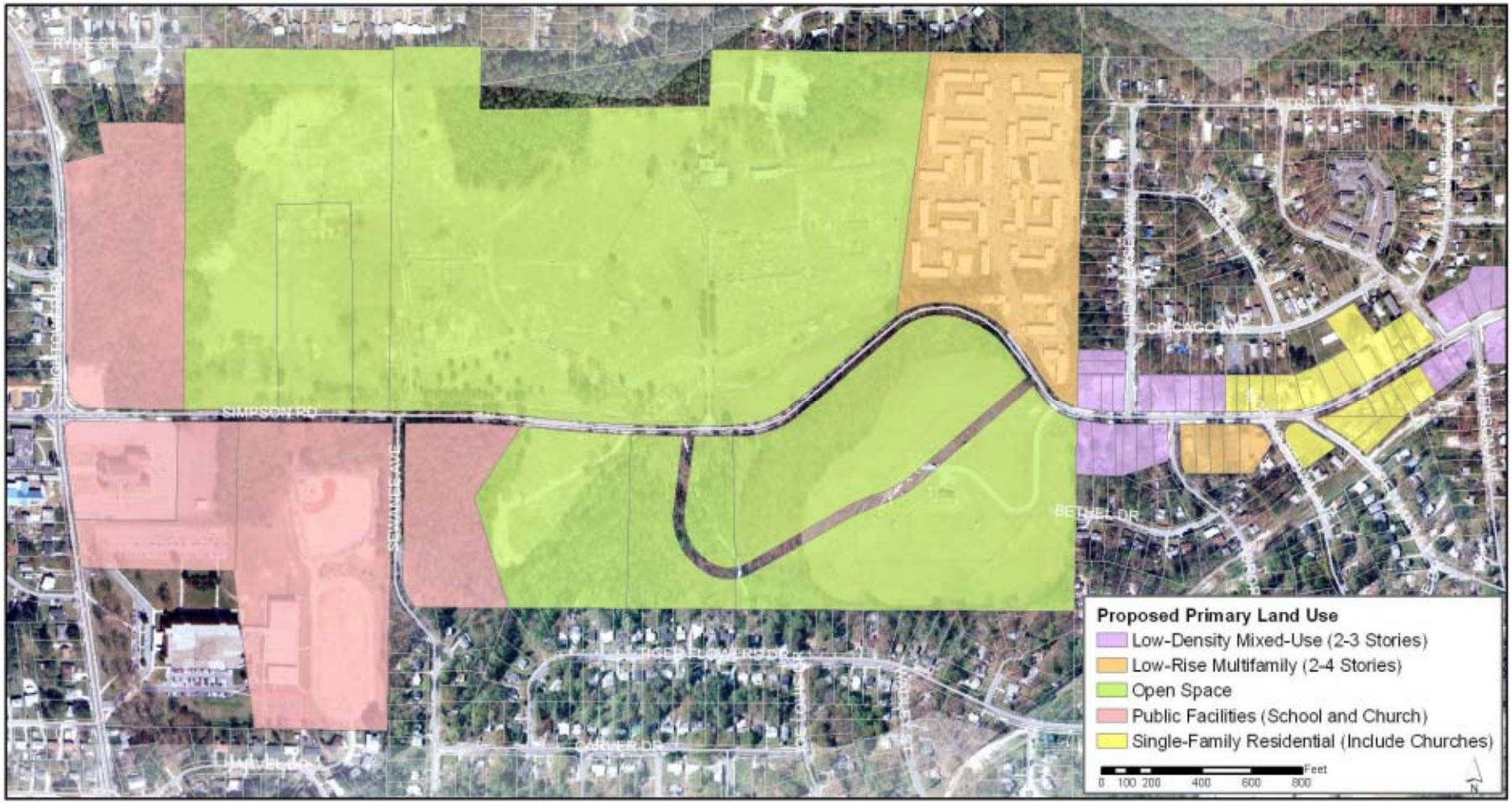


Figure 4. 2 Land Use Policy – Anderson Avenue to Woodlawn Avenue

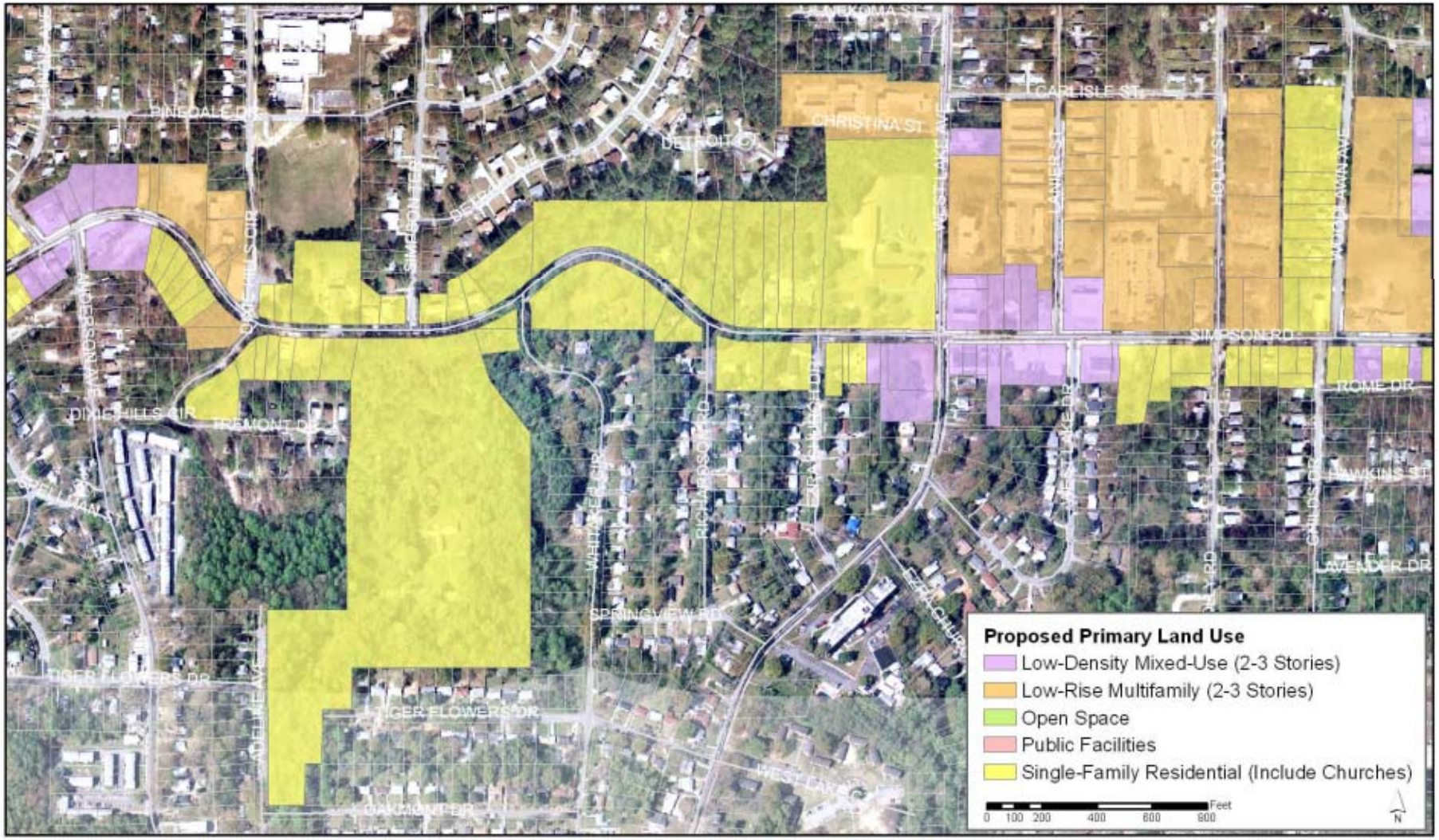


Figure 4. 3 Land Use Policy – Woodlawn Avenue to Joseph E. Lowery Blvd.

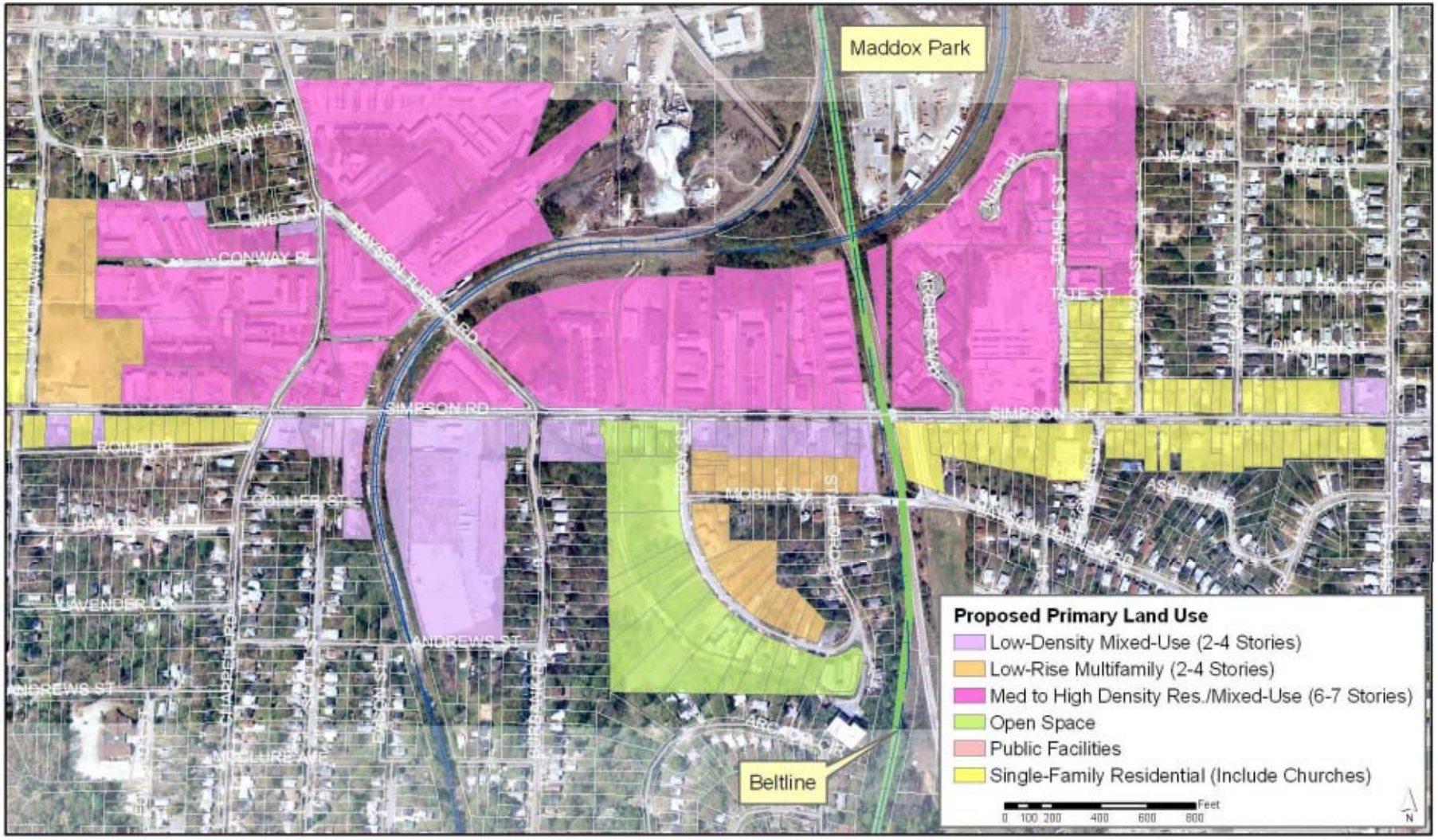
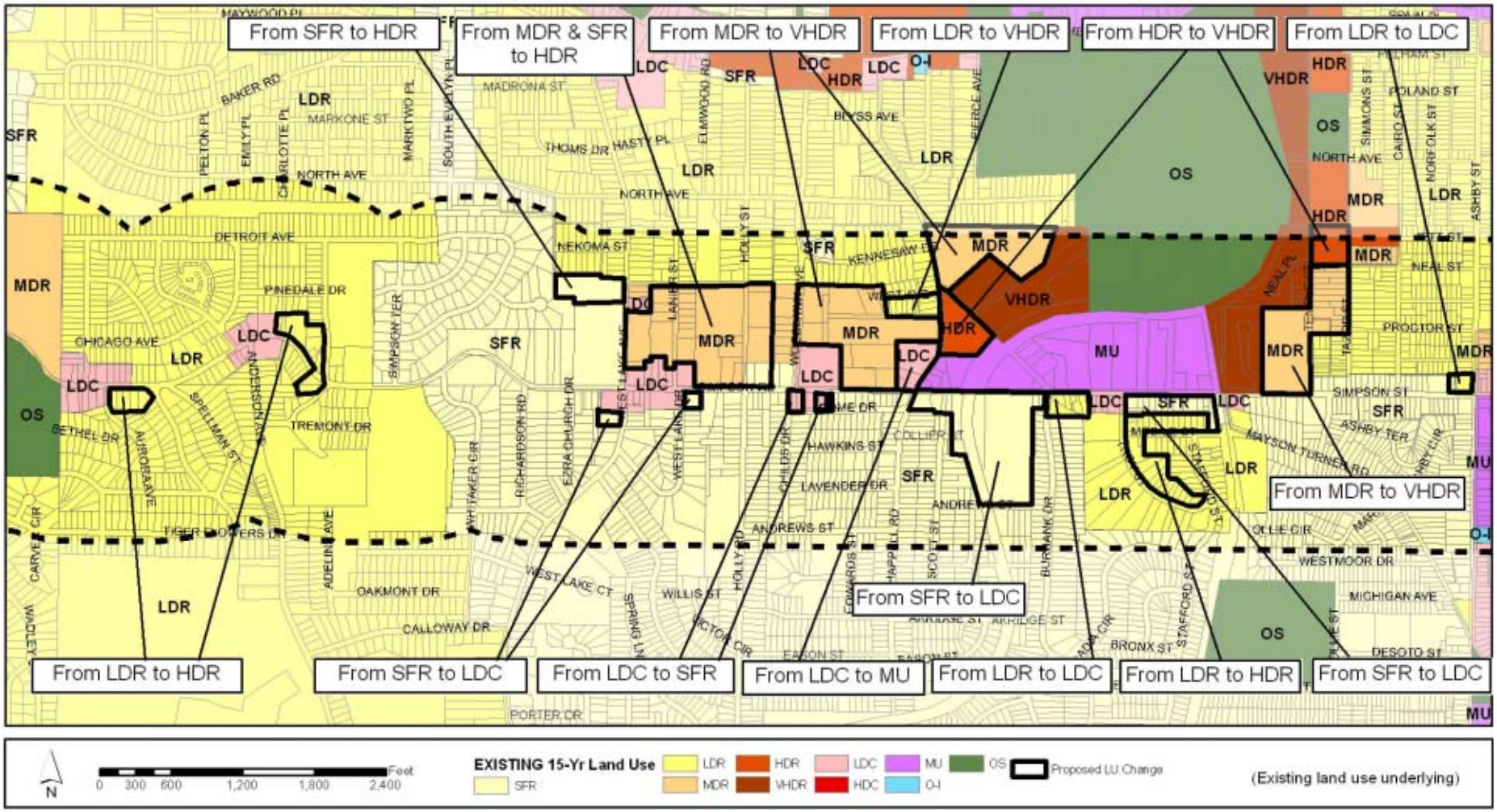


Figure 4. 4 Land Use Change Recommendations



SFR: Single-family Residential
MDR: Medium Density Residential
HDR: High Density Residential (No more than 4 stories for Simpson)
VHDR: Very High Density Residential (No more than 7 Stories for Simpson)

LDC: Low Density Commercial
HDC: High Density Commercial
MU: Mixed Use
O-I: Office Institution
OS: Open Space

Land use set the stage and direction for zoning regulations. Zoning regulations further outline and facilitate development opportunities.

Zoning Policies:

- Keep existing single-family residential zonings (R-4 and R-4A) to preserve single-family residential neighborhoods
- Use Quality of Life Zoning at activity nodes to promote development opportunities
- Reinforce streetscape, public and open space through the standards specified in the Quality of Life Zoning code
- Keep the SPI zoning in Vine City and incorporate the English Avenue Redevelopment Plan zoning recommendation for the eastern section

The Quality of Life zoning are specifically designed to encourage:

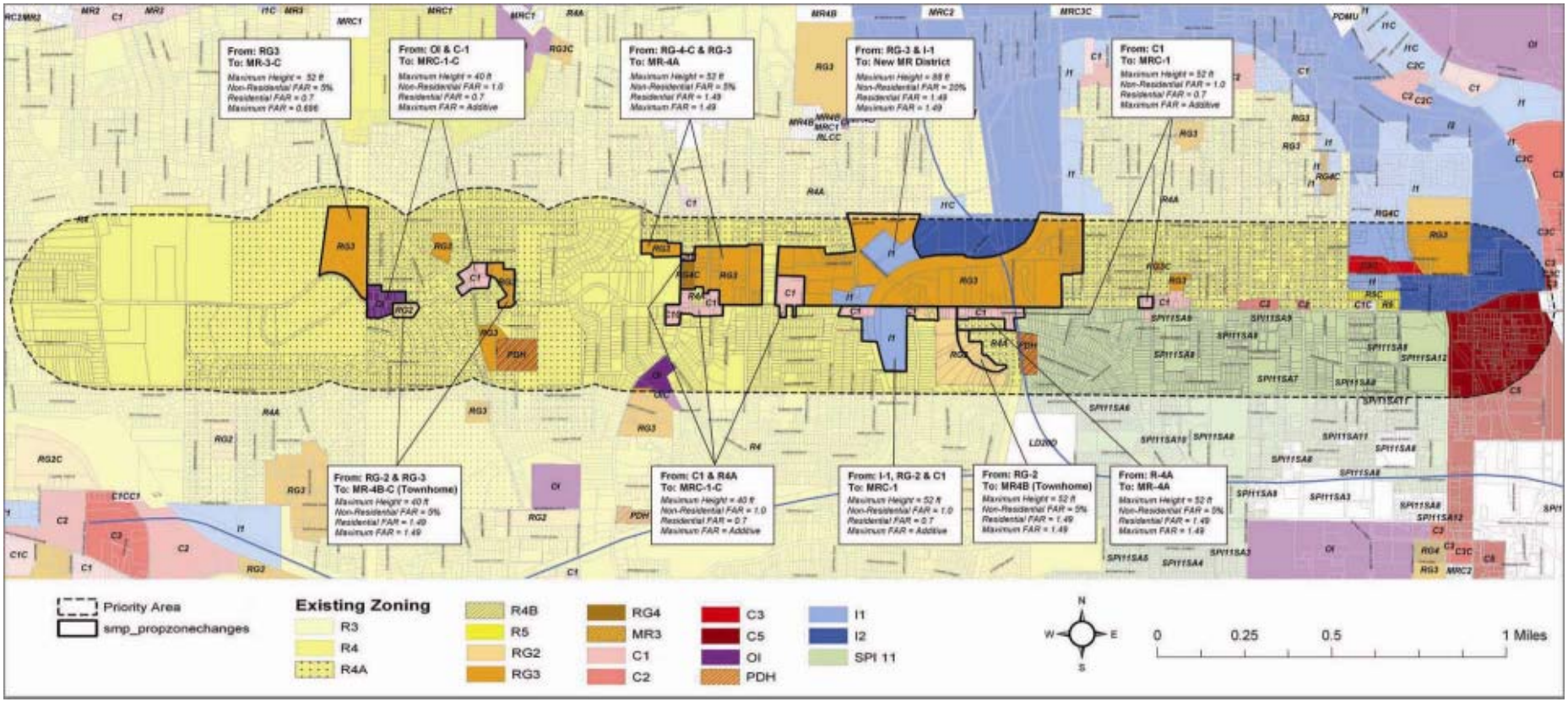
1. Pedestrian friendly development
2. Quality mixed-use and multi-family development
3. Facilitate redevelopment of underutilized commercial corridors
4. Concentration of development at activity nodes

The following QOL zoning districts are recommended to achieve land use goals:

1. MRC-1: Mixed Residential Commercial District
2. MR-3: Multifamily residential District
3. MR-4B: Multifamily Residential District (Townhome District)
4. MR-4A: Multifamily Residential District
5. New MR District: Updated Multifamily Residential District that will facilitate redevelopment at Beltline. It will allow multi-story residential development with street level retail and commercial uses

Conditions are recommended to be added to some of the districts to further control the height and intensity of development. Figure 4.5 illustrates the zoning changes proposed with details on density and height proposed for each districts, detailed map can be found in Chapter 5.

Figure 4. 5 Zoning Change Recommendations



New MR District

A New MR district is needed for portions of Simpson Road, as well as potentially other parts of the City. It should be primarily low-to-mid-rise residential (up to 88 feet in height), with a maximum residential FAR of 3.196.

Non-residential uses should be restricted to 20% of residential floor area and restricted to the first floor. These uses should also be restricted in size to neighborhood-serving businesses. Certain non-residential uses, such as truck stops, automobile service stations, funeral homes, car washes, and similar uses should be prohibited.

Transitional Height Plane Adjacent to "R" districts

All proposed MR and MRC districts will be subject to the Transitional Height Plane requirements adjacent to R (Single-family) zoning districts. This will ensure a set-down in building scale and prevent the blockage of light onto single-family homes.

Activity Nodes Concepts

The long term future of the Simpson corridor will require some restructuring of its current physical place. As stated earlier in this document the Strings of Pearls principle must mature itself into the development fabric of the community. The Pearls along the corridor are catalysts for revitalization of the entire corridor. Based on the ideas gathered and land use and zoning recommendations provided, concept plans are developed for several activity nodes to illustrate the urban design intent, principles, and guidelines. These concept plans represents only one possibility of the future and are for illustrative purpose only.

Beltline Area

This area is the focal point of the entire Simpson Corridor and serves as a major component of the Beltline. It is within the boundary of the Beltline Tax Allocation District. The Beltline Redevelopment Plan has dedicated a stop at Simpson Road and developed a preliminary TOD concept plan for the area accordingly.

Based upon the Beltline Redevelopment Plan, this Simpson Redevelopment Plan update further analyzed the preliminary concept and revised it to better address the area need with its context.

The Market analysis indicated that this area has capacity for 2,500 residential units, 100,000 square feet of retail/restaurant/ entertainment, and 30,000 square feet of professional/office development.

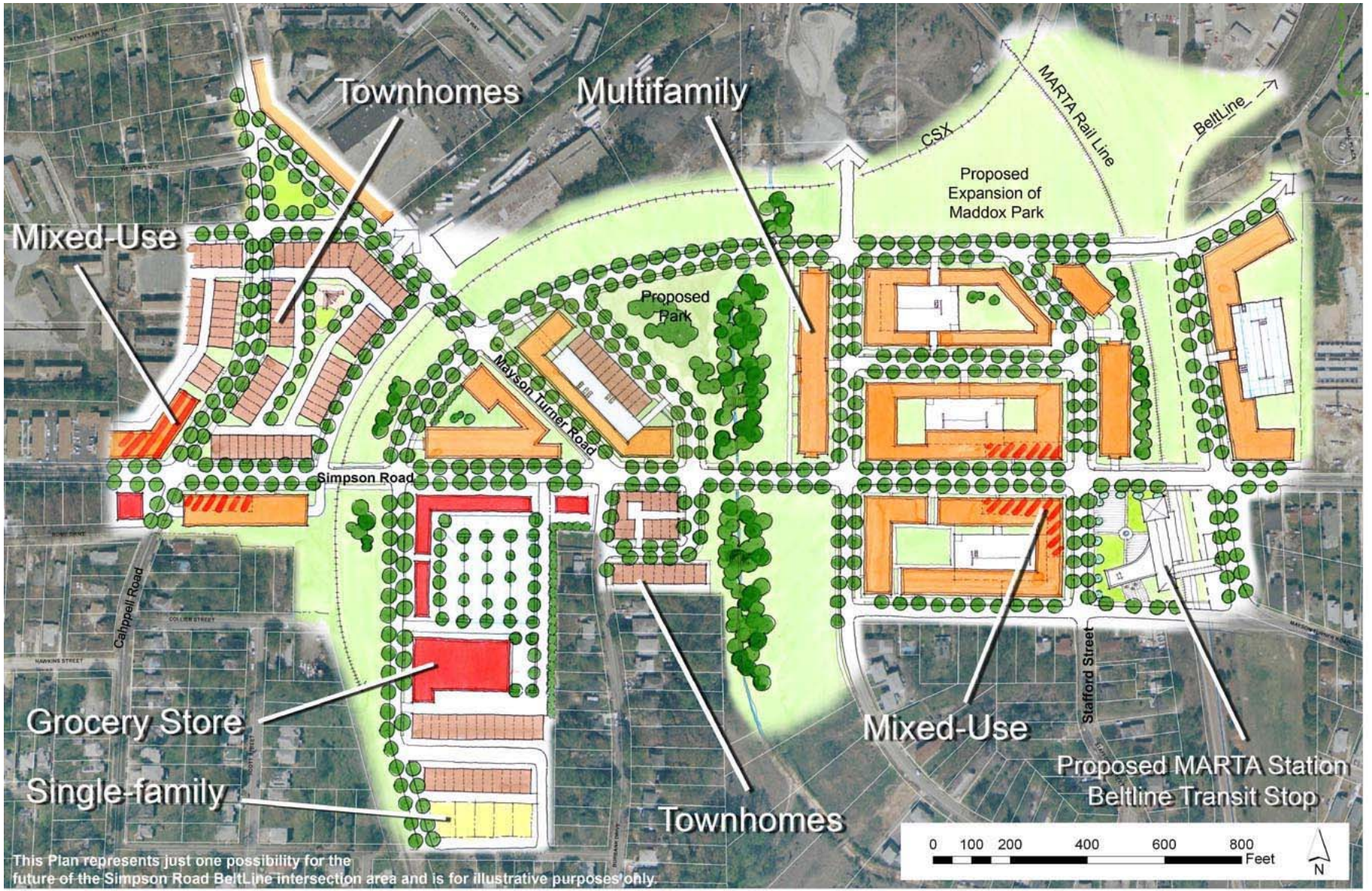
Figure 4.6 illustrated how to create a mixed-use, transited-oriented development stretching along Simpson Road from Chappell Road to Temple Street. As home to a proposed new MARTA station and Beltline stop, it is critical that the area is developed with active, transited-supportive land uses, including housing, retail and services.

The concept plan includes a 35,000 square feet grocery store and other 15,000 square feet of other retail/service on the south side of Simpson Road and a variety of housing types range from single-family, townhomes, to multifamily residential from Chappell Road to the east of MARTA rail line/Beltline alignment. Multi-family residential located on the couth side of Simpson Road and Townhomes are envisioned to be three to four stories, and multi-family residential on the north side of Simpson Road is envisioned to be six to seven stories. Along Simpson Road and/or at major intersections like Chappell Road and Simpson, commercial and retails will be located on the ground floor of multi-family residential buildings to provide a mixed-use environment. Of the total residential units developed at this area, 20% is recommended to be workforce housing units to help create a mixed-income community. Senior housing is also envisioned to be part of the redevelopment.

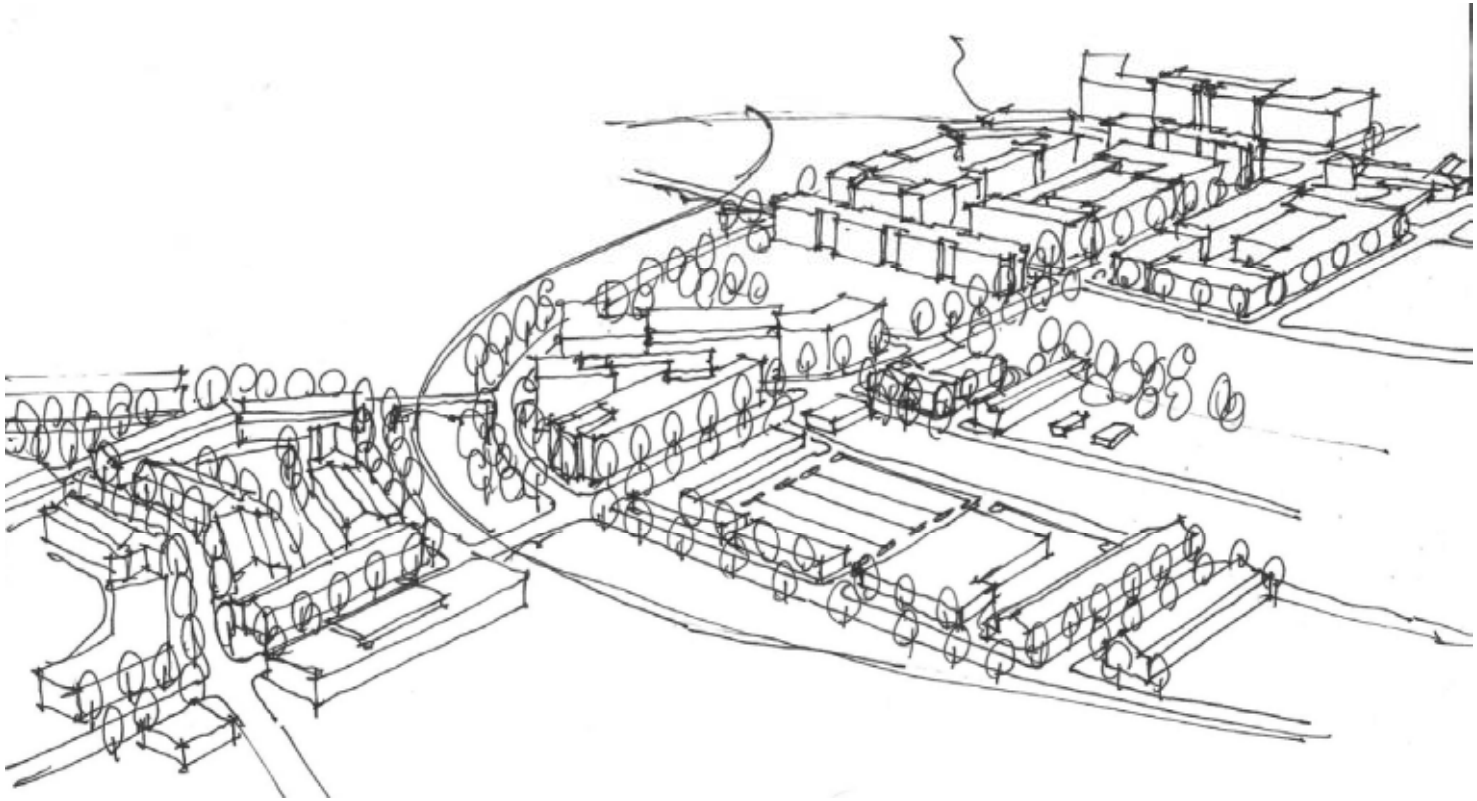
Surrounding these new housing and retail uses, the concept plan envisions an enriched public realm, including new open space along the Proctor Creek, a pocket park at the intersection of Chappell Road and Mason Turner Road, a transit plaza at the proposed Beltline/MARTA station, and linier greenway/path to connect this area with the Maddox Park to the north and the Washington Park to the south.

The new development is encouraged to have a grid of streets and block pattern so as to create a pleasant pedestrian environment. The new development will respect urban public spaces by having buildings close to the sidewalk and have direct access from the sidewalk. Parking should be located behind the buildings or have active uses on the ground floor if located adjacent to a street.

Figure 4. 6 Beltline Area Development Concept
Townhomes: 124 units; Single-family: 5 units; Multifamily units: 2,210 units; Retail/Commercial: 100,000 square feet.



This is a draft perspective for the Beltline Node, it will be replaced by a rendering later.



Westlake Avenue

This area has the potential to become an activity node by having low density commercial/mixed-use development at the intersection and residential development at the surroundings. Residential development can take the format of small-lot single-family or 3-4 story multifamily residences.

According to the market analysis, the node can accommodate roughly 25,000 square feet of neighborhood serving retail spaces, up to 10,000 square feet of professional/office space, and 100 units of residential (Single-family and townhomes) development.

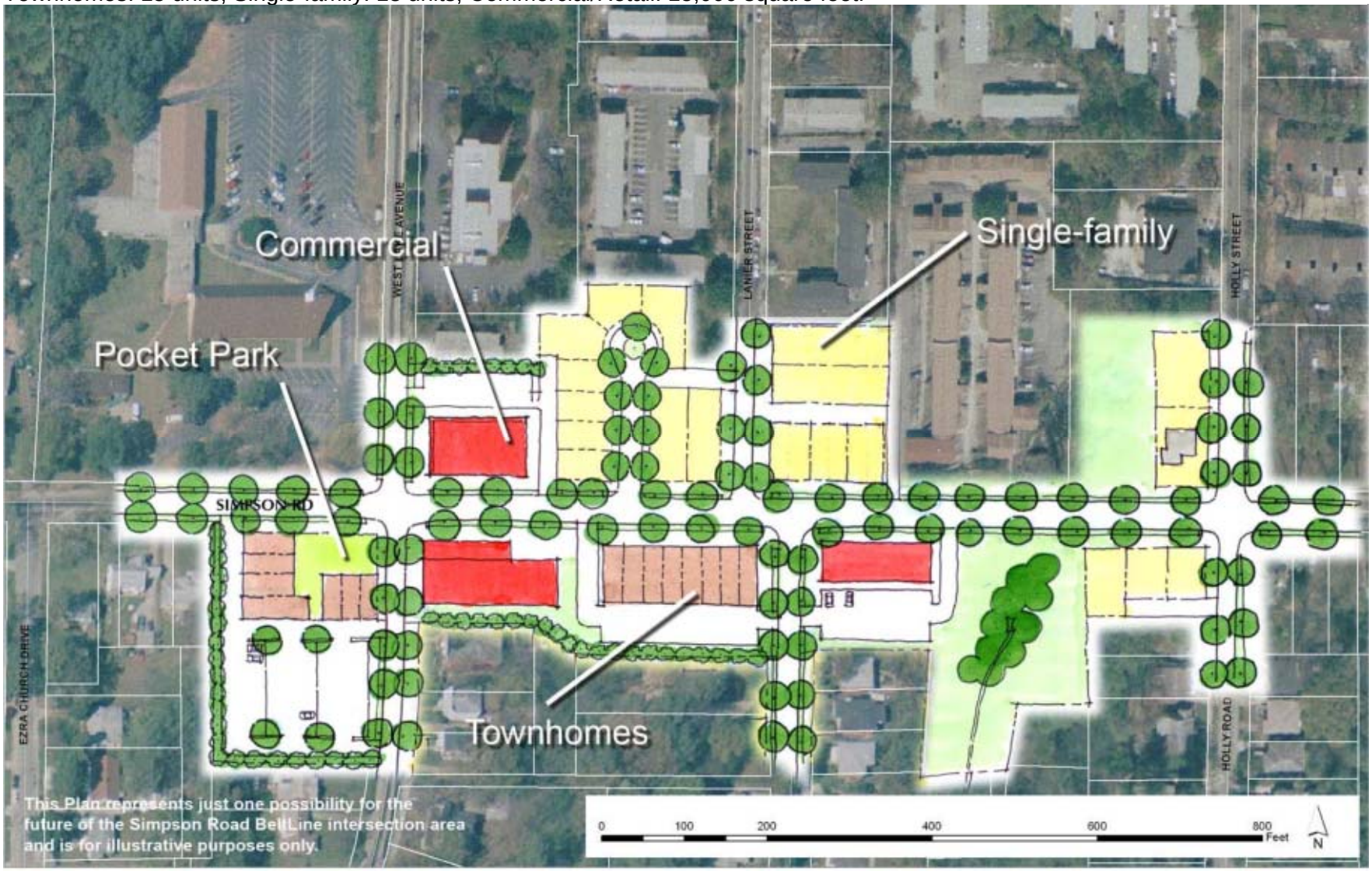
The concept plan showed in Figure 4.7 includes new and adaptive reuse of the historic building as neighborhood commercial, a Pocket park at the intersection of Simpson and Westlake, some new townhomes and single-family residences, and a parking area serving the entire uses at this node. The existing apartments north of Simpson can be preserved in the near future and redeveloped into four to five story multifamily residential in the long term.

Existing condition at Westlake Avenue

Potential look in the future

Figure 4. 7 WestLake Ave. at Simpson Development Concept

Townhomes: 15 units; Single-family: 18 units; Commercial/Retail: 15,000 square feet.



New Jersey Avenue and Anderson Avenue

These two intersections can serve as neighborhood commercial nodes based on the redevelopment of existing commercial and multifamily residential properties. It can sustain low-density mixed-use development that is no more than 3 stories high. The multifamily residencies are envisioned to be no more than 3 stories townhome and/or senior residences with the style and layout that would make an appropriate neighbor to the adjacent single-family neighborhood. For example, the Townhomes can be designed to look like single-family houses. The new development will have improved streetscapes and link to the surrounding neighborhood with pedestrian friendly sidewalks.

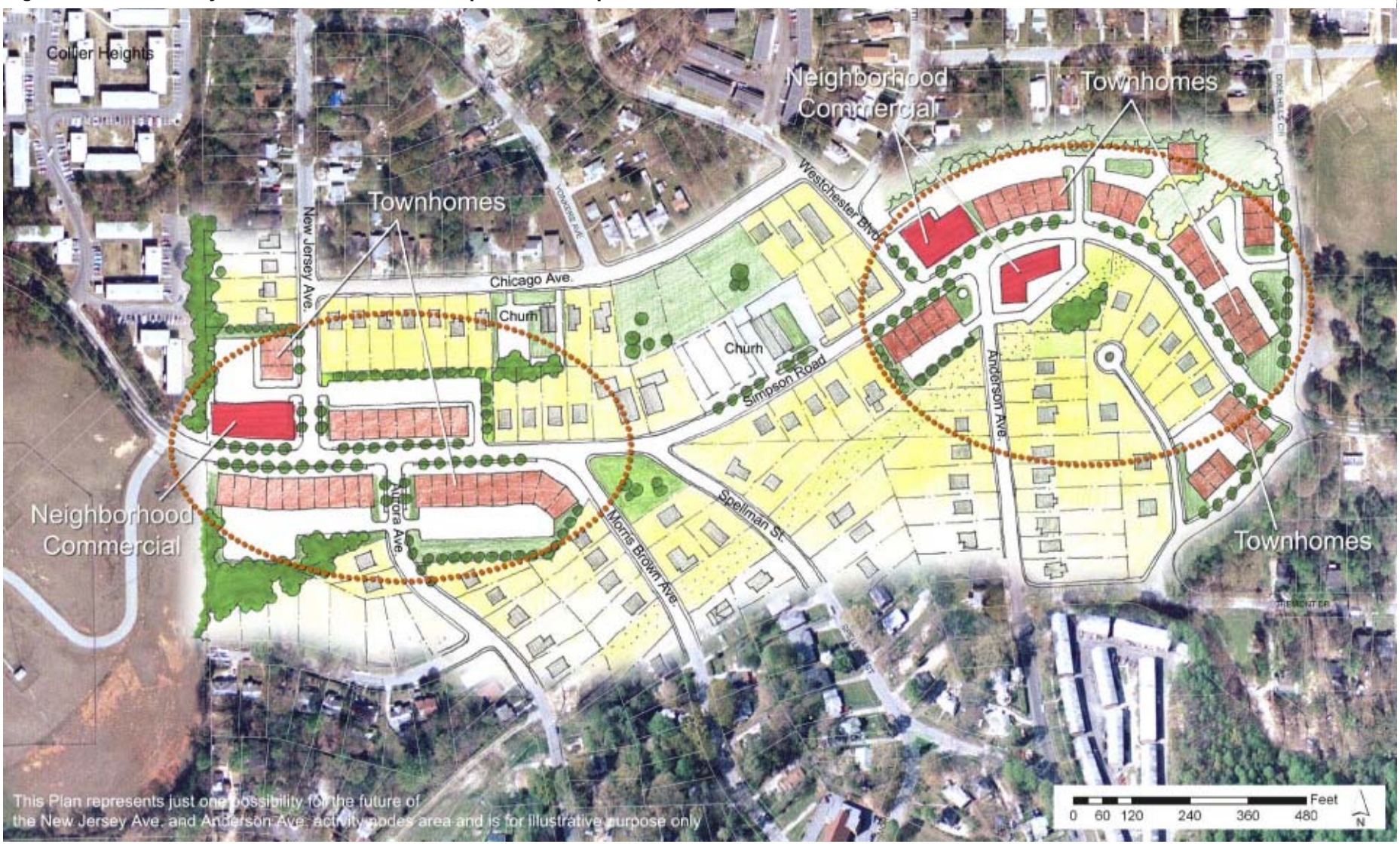
According to the Market analysis, these two nodes can accommodate 100 units of residential and 30,000 square feet of neighborhood retail spaces.

Figure 4.8 illustrate the concept plan for these two nodes.

Existing commercial at New Jersey Ave.

Potential look after redevelopment in the future

Figure 4. 8 New Jersey/Anderson Avenue Development Concept



Retail/Commercial Space: 29,800 square feet
Townhome: 65 units (include 20% workforce units)

Single-family infill is encouraged in surrounding neighborhood.

English Avenue Redevelopment Plan Recommendations

Figure 4.9 illustrates the framework of the English Avenue Redevelopment Plan adjacent to Simpson Street. The following projects are programmed as indicated in the figure:

Project 6: New Jerusalem Baptist Church and Single-Family infill.

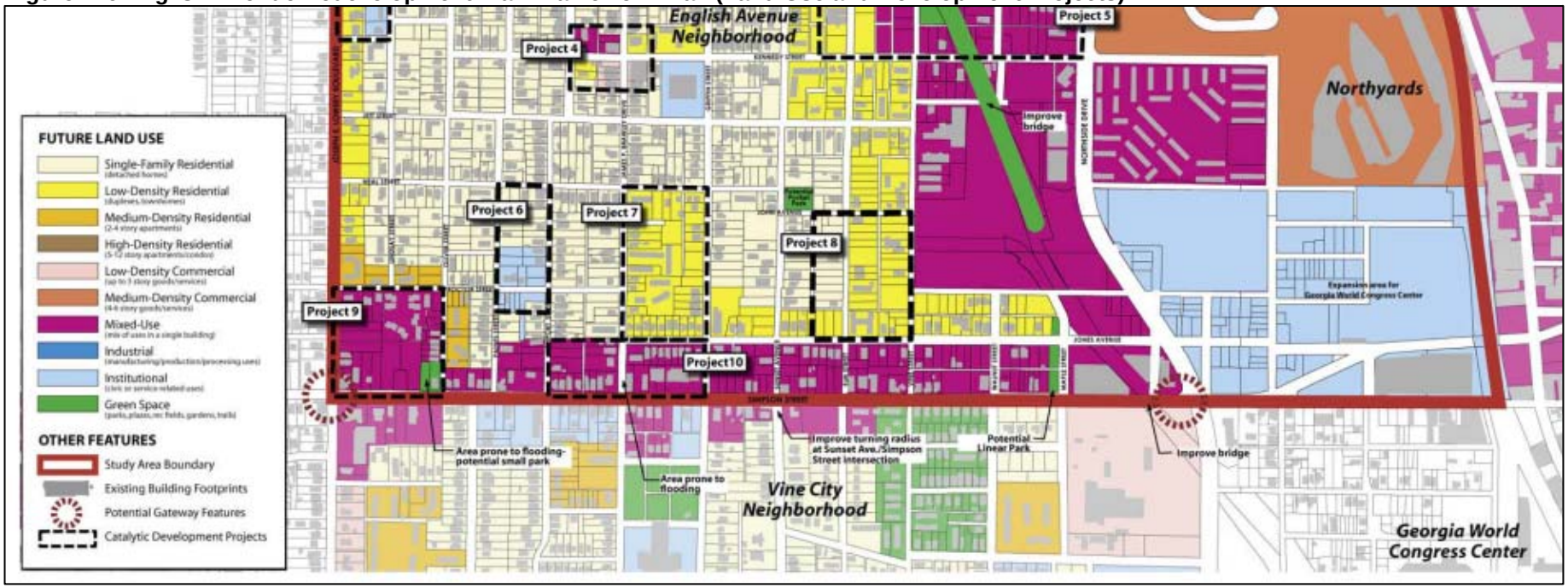
Project 7: Multi-Family Renovation, Townhomes and Single Family.

Project 8: Low-Density Residential and Single-Family Infill

Project 9: Proctor Village. Short and long term plans to develop townhomes and mixed-use buildings by phase.

Project 10: Small Scale Simpson Mixed-Use. New ground floor retail with possible residential or office above.

Figure 4. 9 English Avenue Redevelopment Plan Framework Plan (Land Use and Development Projects)



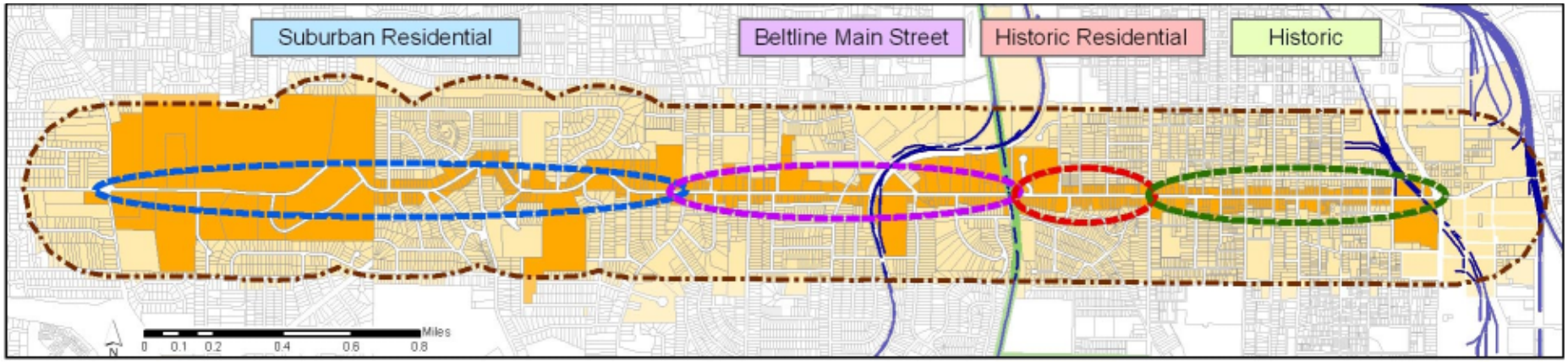
2. Urban Design Recommendations

The Simpson corridor area has a rich history which is reflected in its diverse character from west to east and the historic architectural character embedded in the single-family residential neighborhoods. The goal of urban design recommendations are to enhance the character of the corridor, maintain the cultural heritage, and enhance public realms in terms of parks, open space and plazas.

Urban design policies

- Distinguish the corridor into four character areas
  The current fragmented Simpson corridor can be transformed into an integrate corridor with distinct characters at different section. Based on the historic context and existing conditions, four character sections area recommended (Figure 4.10):
  - Suburban residential sector
  - Historic residential sector
  - Beltline main street sector
  - Historic mixed-use neighborhood sector
- Integrate the different character areas along the corridor through consistent streetscape treatment.
- Encourage use of building materials that reflect the historic context of the corridor. For multifamily and commercial/mixed-use development, prohibit clapboard, vinyl or hardiplank siding facing streets. Encourage flat roofs for multi-family, commercial and mixed-use development.
- Prohibiting parking and blank walls adjacent to the street
- Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles in the redevelopment of Simspon Corridor.
  The basic CPTED principles include:
  - Limited dead-end streets and pedestrian ways
  - Orienting buildings towards the street so that people inside can monitor them through windows, doors and setbacks that engage the street
  - Providing access control to individual buildings without creating gated communities

Figure 4. 10 Simpson Character Areas

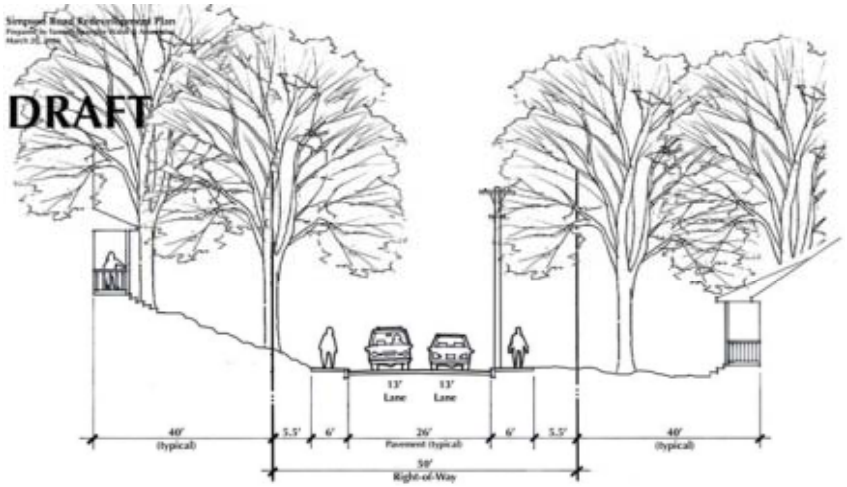


- Ensuring proper maintenance of buildings and landscaping
- Providing adequate lighting

Suburban Residential Sector

From H. E. Holmes Drive to Westlake Avenue, maintain most of the corridor area in its more original suburban state. Provide sidewalk on both sides of the street. Encourage single family infill development to have similar site layout and architectural treatment with existing structures.

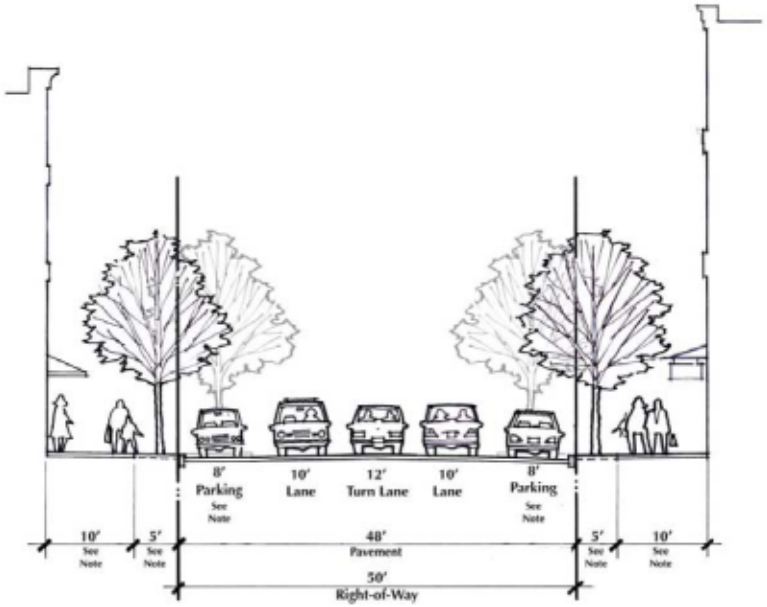
New Jersey and Anderson Avenue will serve as neighborhood activity nodes in this stretch by providing housing and retail /services in a pedestrian friendly environment.



Proposed Street Character

Beltline "Main Street" Sector

From Westlake Avenue to proposed Beltline alignment, developing an active main street activity center along Simpson that provides a mixture of residential, commercial, retail, and recreational uses with pedestrian friendly environment. On-street parking, buried utilities, and widened sidewalks (on private property) will be created as new development occurs. Until that time, existing conditions will remain in place.

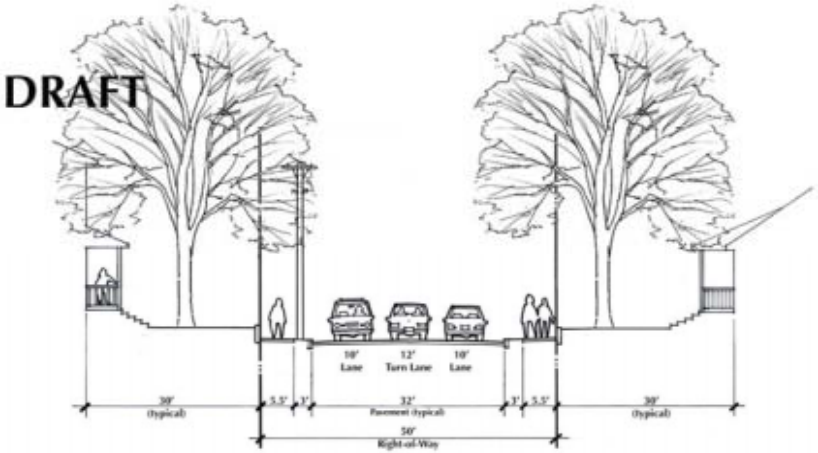


Proposed Street Character
BeltLine "Main Street" Sector

Historic Residential Sector

From Beltline alignment to Joseph E. Lowery Bouleverd, the historic character of this portion of the neighborhood favors maintaining the existing land use patterns. Preserving the bungalow style housing in this area can ensure the stabilization of this portion of the corridor.

As a result of keeping the more traditional and original development profile requires preserving 5' -6' sidewalk. The existing right of way will consist of 2 travel lanes and 2 bike lanes on either side of the street. The bike lanes will connect the Beltline with Downtown Bike paths/routes.

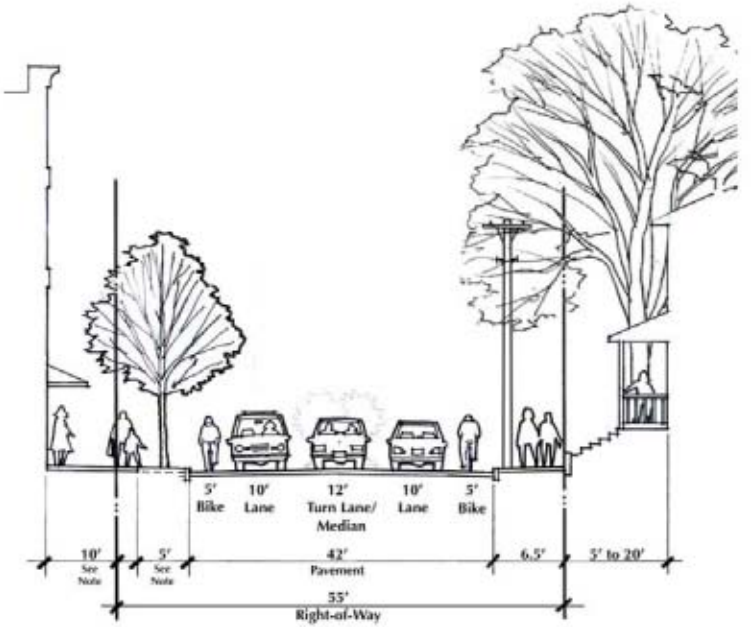


Proposed Street Character
Historic Residential Sector

Historic Mixed-Use Neighborhood Sector

Coupled with Vine City and English Avenue Redevelopments, the section of Simpson from Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard to Northside Drive will serve as a mixed use corridor with a couple of activity nodes in between. This mixed-use character will be supported by two travel lanes and a center turn lane in the middle, two bike lanes on either side of the street, and wide sidewalk that serves the proposed redevelopment.

The rational of the street configuration at this sector will be explained in detail in the following transportation recommendation section.



Proposed Street Character
Historic Mixed-Use Neighborhood Sector

3. Transportation Recommendations

Based on a thorough assessment of the study area's current and future transportation and land use needs, the study team has developed a set of recommendations for transportation policies and projects that will address the goals of Simpson Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

Roadway Operation

Roadway Operation Policies

- Street profiles: Maintain unified and consistent street profiles that balance the corridor's transportation and safety needs with land use and neighborhood character objectives.

  The study has identified four distinct sectors within the Simpson Street/Road corridor and developed a recommended profile for each that can be accommodated almost exclusively using existing public right-of-way. Future development and transportation projects should support these profiles whenever possible.

- Signal system and communication: Ensure that all traffic signals within the corridor are installed and maintained in accordance with the latest standards. Ensure that the signals are properly timed and coordinated. Upgrade span-wire signals with mast arm signals.

- Traffic controls: Ensure that all traffic controls, including signage, striping, and pavement markings are consistent with current MUTCD (Manual of Uniform traffic Control Devices) Standards.

- Utility relocation or upgrade: Encourage utilities and other impediments including utility poles, sign posts, and fire-hydrants, within sidewalk and in roadway clear-zones to be relocated in accordance with GDOT and ADA standards.

- Curb and Gutter: Install, repair, or replace standard curband and gutter throughout corridor to improve safety, drainage and aesthetics.

- Access Management: Develop policies to reduce curbcut and vehicular access across sidewalks and pedestrian areas, particularly in the proximity of intersections. Encourage inter-parcels access for vehicles and pedestrians.

- Railroad crossing: Re-grade Simpson Road at CSX crossing to reduce grade differential. Install safety devices to improve safety at crossing for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Roadway Operation Projects

According to the recommended policies, the following roadway operation projects are recommended:

- S-1, S-2, S-3: Roadway Operation for Beltline "Main Street" Sector, Historic Residential Sector, and Historic Mixed-Use neighborhood Sector (Figure 4.11).

  Project S-3 recommends modifying the cross-section of the road between Northside Drive and Lowery Boulevard from 4 through lanes to a 3 lane facility with bike lanes. This recommendation improves safety and operations for vehicles and pedestrians, and allows continuity in bike lanes from downtown Atlanta to the future BeltLine development node along Simpson Road and the programmed Westside Multi-use Path in the same area.

  The background rationale for this project is as follow:

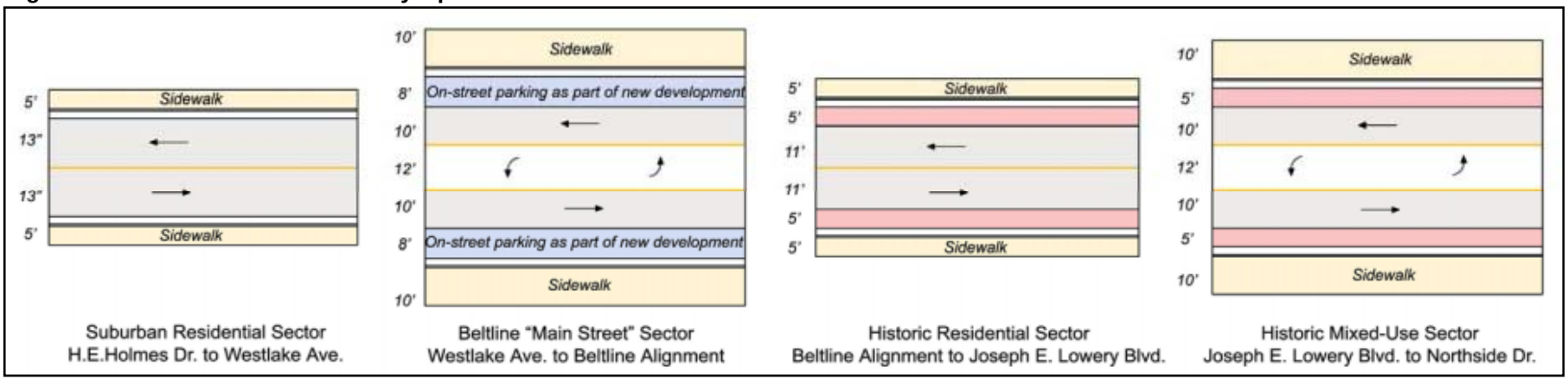
Simpson Road in this location is currently a 4 lane road with 2 travel lanes in either direction. It is functionally classified as an Urban Collector. Current average daily traffic (ADT) on Simpson Road is less than 8,000 vehicles per day (GDOT data for traffic counts 2003 and 2004). 2030 future estimated ADT on Simpson Road is less than 10,000. The future year ADT estimates include the projected impacts of development of a BeltLine node along Simpson Road about 0.4 miles west of this location.

These ADT volumes are relatively low for a 4 lane urban collector facility. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) guidance suggests that increasing capacity of a roadway from 2 lanes may be warranted when the design hour volume is greater than 800 vehicles per hour (VPH) in either direction. Current peak hour counts on Simpson at Lowery are significantly less than this threshold in the p.m. peak (522 westbound, 280 eastbound) and the a.m. peak period (211 westbound, 379 eastbound) according to traffic counts taken in March of 2006 for the Simpson Road Corridor Plan.

There are many successful instances of low volume 4 lane roadways being converted to 3 lane facilities, with one travel lane in either direction and a center turn lane. Generally these conversions are undertaken to improve the neighborhood feel of an area and to allow implementation of bike lanes, additional on street parking, transit accommodation, wider sidewalks and streetscape, or some mixture of these elements. The GDOT Context Sensitive Design Guidance, April, 2006, states, "*Designers are generally more open to exceptions on routes of lower functional classification. Collectors and local streets carry lower volumes of travel over shorter distances and typically have more familiar users."*

The Simpson Road Corridor functions as a de facto east west thoroughfare, although with relatively low traffic volumes. As a thoroughfare, it is paralleled by three much higher functioning parallel thoroughfares: Donald L. Hollowell Parkway to the North, and Martin Luther King Boulevard to the South, both major arterials, and the Interstate 20 freeway to the South. Donald L. Hollowell Parkway is currently programmed to be widened to a continuous four lane road from Interstate 285 to Northside Drive, and upgraded by GDOT, which is likely to have the effect of making it a more attractive thoroughfare to east-west commuters, and thus lessening the relative

Figure 4. 11 Recommended Roadway Operations



attractiveness of Simpson Road as a thoroughfare and reducing traffic volumes. In addition, all of these parallel routes avoid the at-grade rail crossing on Simpson Road.

Conversion of Simpson Road to a 3 lane cross-section allows for use of 10' of the existing road surface to be converted into bicycle lanes; one 5' bike lane on either side of Simpson Road. Bike lanes in this location, and along Simpson Road to the west of Lowery Boulevard to the BeltLine, allow connection to bike lanes currently being constructed along Ivan Allen Boulevard to the east of Northside Drive and to the programmed Westside Multi-use Trail to be constructed along the BeltLine. This connectivity provides continuous bike lanes into downtown Atlanta, and to a major off road trail, and begins to develop a bike network system on Atlanta's west side.

Conversion of Simpson Road to a 3 lane cross-section also benefits pedestrian safety by reducing the number of traffic lanes they have to cross to get across Simpson Road. The center turn lane can include raised medians in selected locations to provide access management for offset intersections, reducing conflict points, and providing the opportunity to create pedestrian refuge islands that reduce the potential for conflict with vehicles and allow crossing the through lanes in stages. It also improves the pedestrian environment by further separating travel lanes from pedestrians on adjacent sidewalks.

At several intersections along Simpson Road with limited sight distance and tight turning radii, the separation of the through lanes from the corner provided by the bike lanes may also help to smooth turn movements and improve safety. The center turn lane should better delineate where left turns by vehicles should be made and accommodate the anticipated level of turning traffic.

Simpson Road to the west of Lowery Boulevard is already a 3 lane street, with 2 westbound through lanes and one eastbound through lane. This section is proposed to be converted to a 2 lane section with bike lanes, allowing for continuation of the bike lanes but also improved lane continuity for motor vehicles. A detailed traffic engineering analysis undertaken at this location indicates that the intersection level of service will still be acceptable, and that overall through put will not be adversely impacted, both for current and future year projected traffic volumes.

In addition, at a national level, there are some studies that suggest decreased accident rates and improved operations for emergency response vehicles on arterial roads converted from 4 lanes to 3 lanes, as shown in table 4.1:

Table 4. 1 Previous Examples of Roadway Conversions

Changes in Traffic Volume and Collisions After Roadways Changed from Four Lanes to Two Lanes plus TWLTL (Seattle, Wash.)

ROADWAY SECTION	DATE CHANGE	ADT (BEFORE)	ADT (AFTER)	CHANGE	COLLISION REDUCTION
Greenwood Ave. N, from N 80th St. to N 50th St.	April 1995	11872	12427	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL plus bike lanes	24 to 10 58%
N 45th Street in Wallingford Area	December 1972	19421	20274	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL	45 to 23 49%
8th Ave. NW in Ballard Area	January 1994	10549	11858	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus planted median with turn pockets as needed	18 to 7 61%
Martin Luther King Jr. Way, north of I-90	January 1994	12336	13161	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL plus bike lanes	15 to 6 60%
Dexter Ave. N, East side of Queen Anne Area	June 1991	13606	14949	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL plus bike lanes	19 to 16 59%
24th Ave. NW, from NW 85th St. to NW 65th St.	October 1995	9727	9754	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL	14 to 10 28%
Madison St., from 7th Ave. to Broadway	July 1994	16969	18075	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL	28 to 28 0%
W Government Way/Gilman Ave. W, from W Ruffner St. to 31st. Ave. W	June 1991	12916	14286	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL plus bike lanes	6 to 6 0%
12th Ave., from Yesler Way to John St.	March 1995	11751	12557	4 lanes to 2 lanes plus TWLTL plus bike lanes	16 to 16 0%
				Total	185 to 122 34%

Source: The Conversion of Four-Lane Undivided Urban Roadways to Three-Lane Facilities; Thomas M. Welch, Director, Office of Transportation Safety; Engineering Division, Iowa Department of Transportation

- S-16, S-17: Install pedestrian refuge and raised median in center turn lane of Simpson Street to improve pedestrian safety and traffic operations on Simpson Street near Griffin Street and between Sciple Terrace and Paines Avenue. The traffic operations and safety analysis indicates high rates of pedestrian and vehicular crashed in this area, most likely due to the offset alignments of the local streets and high rates of mid-block pedestrian crossings. These conditions support the construction of a pedestrian refuge and median to limit conflicting traffic operations and provide enhanced pedestrian crossing safety.

- S-27: Regrade Simpson Road at CSX crossing. Currently programmed as part of Simpson Road Streetscape Improvements, but in need of additional funding.

- S-28: Install "Signal Ahead" advanced warning signs 125' from the stop bar, on the following approaches:
  - Eastbound approach to the intersection of Simpson Street and Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard
  - Northbound approach to the intersection of Simpson Street and Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard
  - Eastbound approach to the intersection of Simpson Road and Chappell Road
  - Northbound approach to the intersection of Simpson Road and Chappell Road
  - Southbound approach to the intersection of Simpson Road and Westlake Avenue

- S-23: Conduct further study to evaluate safety of current two-way operations on narrow streets north of Simpson Street between Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard and Northside Drive. Evaluate feasibility of widening roadways, parking restrictions, or restricting operations to one way travel.

- S-29: Signal warrant review. Several intersections along the Simpson corridor should be reviewed to determine if they warrant the installation or removal of traffic signals based on pedestrian safety, vehicular operations and adjacent land use.
  - Mayson Turner Avenue: It is likely that this intersection currently does, or soon will warrant a traffic signal based on existing development plans.
  - Tazor Street and Troy Street: Due to the proximity of Herndon Elementary School to the intersection of Simspon Street and Temple Street, it is recommended that additional atudy should be carried out to determine whether the existing signal at Tazor Street should be removed and a new signal be created at temple Street.

Intersection Improvements

Intersection Improvement Policies

- Joseph E. Lowery Blvd, Chappell Road, and Westlake Avenue:
  - Reconfigure three study area intersections to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety at intersections
  - Increase the corner radii based on AASHTO design standards for the three study intersections to accommodate transit, school buses and trucks.
  - Improve or add left turn lanes to increase storage capacity at intersections and reduce the number of vehicles blocking the through lanes while positioning to turn.

- Conduct safety assessment and improvement for other intersections

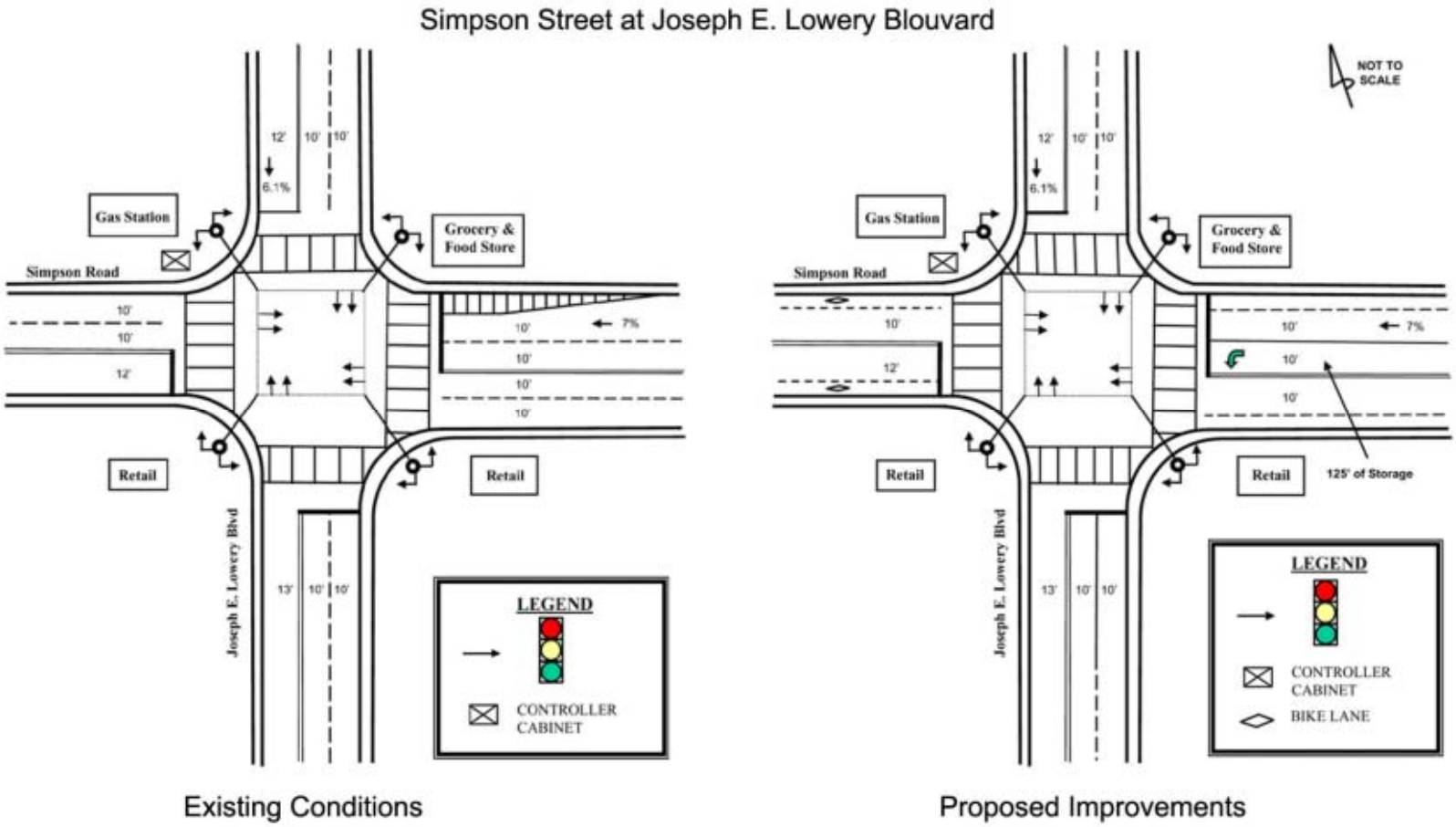
Intersection Improvement Projects

- S-10: Simpson at Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. (Figure 4.12)

  To accommodate one 10-foot left turn lane with 125-foot storage, one 10-foot shared through and right turn lane on the westbound approach 5-foot bike lanes on both sides of Simpson Street.

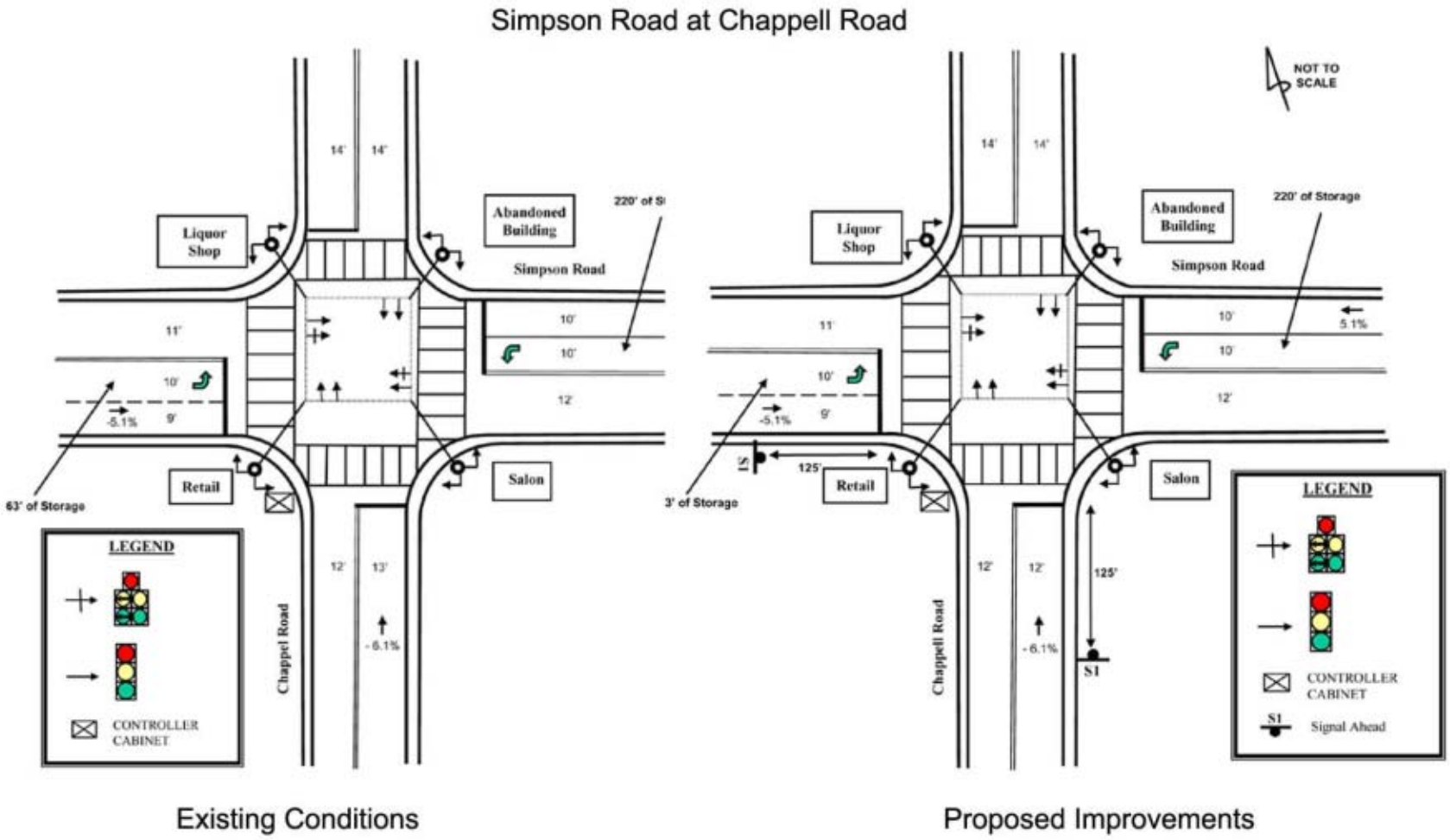
  To accommodate one 12-foot shared through-left-right turn lane and 5-foot bike lane on the eastbound approach, the west receiving leg should accommodate one 10-fppt through travel lane and 5-foot bike lane.

Figure 4. 12 Intersection Improvement at Simpson Street and Joseph E. Lowery Blvd.



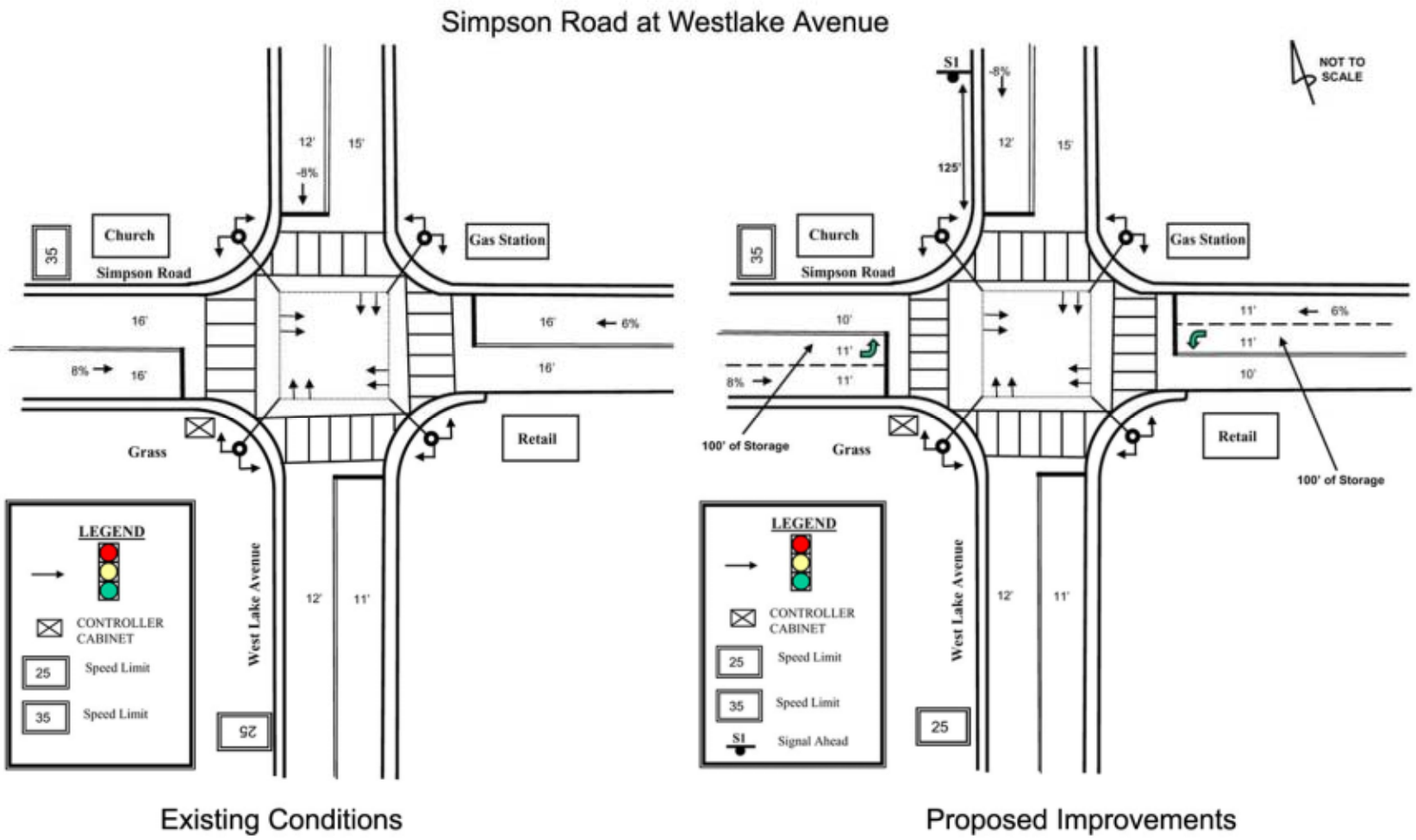
- S-11: Simpson Road at Chappell Road (Figure 4.13)
  To accommodate one 11-foot left turn lane with 100-foot storage, one 11-foot shared through and right turn lane on the east bound and westbound approaches.
  To accommodate one 10-foot through travel lane on the east and west receiving legs.

Figure 4. 13 Intersection Improvement at Simpson Road and Chappell Road



- S-12: Simpson Road and Westlake Avenue (Figure 4.14)
  Install 10-foot left turn lanes on eastbound and west bound approaches with 100-foot storage at the intersection.

Figure 4. 14 Intersection Improvement at Simpson Road and Westlake Avenue



- S-13: Safety assessment and improvements for Intersection at Simpson Road and Mayson Turner Avenue (North segment)
  Mayson Turner Avenue intersects Simpson Road at a skewed angle from the north, making northbound left turns and westbound right turns more difficult than a right angle intersection. Bus operations from eastbound Simpson Road to southbound Burbank Drive have difficulty making the turn due to the tight turning radius, Driveways of adjacent businesses on the north side of Simpson Road are close to the intersection and not well defined.

- S-14: Safety assessment and improvements for the intersection at Chappell Road and Mayson Turner Avenue.
  Cajppell Road intersects Simpson Road at a skewed angle on both the north and south sides of the intersection, making some turning movements elongated and more difficult. Commercial business driveways are adjacent and relatively close to the intersection in all quadrants and are generally not well defined.

- S-15: Safety assessment and improvements for the intersection at Simpson Road and H. E. Holmes Drive.
  Traffic on H. E. Holmes Drive approaches the Simpson Road intersection at relatively high speed. There may be some sight distance issues with turning traffic in this location.

Pedestrian Improvements

Pedestrian Improvement Policies

The Entire Simpson Corridor should ultimately have acceptable sidewalks on both sides of the road throughout the corridor. To prioritize potential projects, it is recommended that the following standards are applied:

Standards for new sidewalks:

- All new sidewalks should be 5' minimum, ADA-compliant.
- All new sidewalks in mixed-use and multifamily residential areas and should be 10' minimum with landscape buffer, ADA-compliant.
- All intersection improvements should include ADA compliant pedestrian signals and, crosswalks on all legs.
- Utilities and signs should not be located within sidewalks in such a way that they inhibit safe passage or ADA compliance.

Highest Priority Pedestrian Improvements:

- Install sidewalks on at least one side all roads collector or higher,
- Install or upgrade ADA compliant sidewalks on both sides near schools and activity centers.
- Install ADA ramps and full crosswalks at all signalized intersections and near schools and activity centers.

Second Priority Pedestrian Improvements:

- Upgrade existing sub-standard sidewalks to 5', ADA-compliant.
- ADA ramps at all curbs.

Third Tier Pedestrian Improvements:

- Sidewalks on both sides of all roads classified as collector or higher.

Pedestrian Improvement Projects

Based upon the above standards and priority for the development of sidewalks along the corridor, the following projects are recommended to improve pedestrian safety and mobility:

- S-4: New 5' sidewalk on north side of Simpson Road from H. E. Holmes Drive to New Jersey Avenue.

- S-5: New 5' sidewalk on south side of Simpson Road from Sewanee Avenue to New Jersey Avenue.

- S-6: New 5' sidewalk on south side of Simpson Road from New Jersey Avenue to Westlake Avenue.

- S-27: Simpson Road Streetscape Project Additional Funding.
  The Simpson Road Streetscape project currently underway will address a significant share of pedestrian issues and needs along the Simpson Road corridor. There is currently not enough funding programmed for the project to complete all of its elements. Additional funding should be secured to implement the project as planned and designed.

- S-7: review and improve traffic controls, signage and striping corridor-wide. This project includes safety improvements at crosswalk adjacent to Herndon Elementary school, and near Dixie Hill Circle.

- New or upgraded sidewalks near MARTA bus stops more than 200' from a signalized intersection. (Included in project S-24: Corridor –wide transit amenities).

Bicycle Improvements

The Simpson Road reconfiguration projects (S-1 and S-2) recommended 5' bike lanes to be incorporated on both sides of Simpson from Northside Drive to Beltline. It is in support of other City and regional bicycle and greenway initiatives by connecting future Beltline to Downtown. These initiatives include Atlanta Beltline redevelopment Plan, English Avenue greenway proposal, and planned PATH Westside Multi-Use Trail.

Transit Routes and Facilities

Transit Policy Recommendations

- MARTA Bus Route Alterations
  The current route structure of the MARTA system concentrates primarily on serving MARTA transit stations to the south of the Simpson Road corridor, without providing adequate service along the corridor or to activity centers in Midtown and Downtown Atlanta. The goals of the Simpson Corridor Redevelopment Plan would best be met with direct transit service along the corridor with direct connections to Midtown and Downtown Atlanta, and other major arterials such as Northside Drive and H. E. Holmes Drive. It is recommended MARTA review its route structure and consider a direct route along Simpson and connecting thoroughfares.

- MARTA/Beltline Transit Station
  This Plan supports the proposed new and infill transit Station that would connect the Atlanta Beltline and MARTA at Simpson Road.

- Atlanta Beltline
  Support the Atlanta Beltline proposal as a vital key to improving the quality of life along the Simpson Road Corridor and to provide economic development incentive.

Transit Improvement Projects

- S-24: Corridor-wide transit amenities. Ensure that all transit stops are fate, paved, and equipped with safe and adequate sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.

- S-25: Activity center enhanced transit amenities. Ensure that all bus stops near schools and activity centers are equipped with transit shelters, seating, lighting, and trash receptacles.

- S-26: MARTA bus route structure alterations. Implement revised direct transit service along the Simpson Street/Road corridor providing an east/west direct route to Downtown Atlanta.

Local and Regional Connectivity

The following projects will improve local connectivity by linking neighborhoods, schools, and activity centers in areas where the street grid is currently discontinuous.

- S-18: White Elementary new connection. A new 2 lane road linking Detroit Avenue and North Avenue or Baker Road in the vicinity of White Elementary School and businesses along Simpson Road will increase mobility and accessibility, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reduce vehicle-miles-traveled and emissions for school related trips. Currently, the trip from the intersection of North Avenue to White Elementary School is 1.6 miles, which is beyond a comfortable range for walking. Depending on its alignment, a new road connection could reduce the trip to as little as 0.13 miles.

The following projects restore roadway connections that are disrupted by the confluence of the MARTA rail line and CSX rail corridors. They will provide enhanced mobility and accessibility to proposed mixed-use redevelopment projects along Simpson Road near the Beltline and o the proposed expansion of Maddox Park.

- S-19 Troy Street new connection. New 0.32-mile roadway to reconnect street grid near Beltline redevelopment and provide access to Maddox expansion.

- S-20: North Avenue new connection. New 0.27-mile roadway to reconnect street grid near Beltline redevelopment and provide access to Maddox expansion.

- S-21: Temple Street new connection. New 0.12-mile roadway to reconnect street grid near Beltline redevelopment and provide access to Maddox expansion.

- S-22: Jett Street new connection. New 0.36mile roadway to reconnect street grid near Beltline redevelopment and provide access to Maddox expansion.

4. Environmental Recommendations

Environmental Policies

- Continue to support the City Efforts to acquire open spaces along the length of Proctor Creek, especially the floodplain area south of Simpson Road
- Discourage development and redevelopment in the floodplain areas along Simpson.
- Encourage the creation of parks and open space along the corridor
- Work with department of Watershed and Clean Water Atlanta to improve sewer capacity so as to accommodate new development.
- Study the feasibility of creating a storm water utility in the Proposed Beltline transit area.
  A storm water detention pond could be created in and around the floodplain area to serve new development and provide amenities as the same time.

Environmental Recommendations

The following parks/open space recommendations are made based on policies (Figure 4.15 and 4.16):

a. Create a pocket park (about 0.25 acres) at the south west corner of Simpson and Westlake Avenue.
b. Create open space associated with new development at the Proctor Creek floodplain area north of Simpson Road.
c. Create a Pocket Park through realignment of Chappell and Mayson Turner Roads.
d. Acquire properties in the Proctor Creek floodplain area south of Simpson Road for open space (around 7 acres).
e. Create trails to connect the Simpson Beltline area with Maddox Park and Washington Park
f. Create Beltline Transit Plaza (about 0.25 acres) at the proposed Beltline Station at Simpson

Figure 4. 15 Environmental/Open Space Recommendations

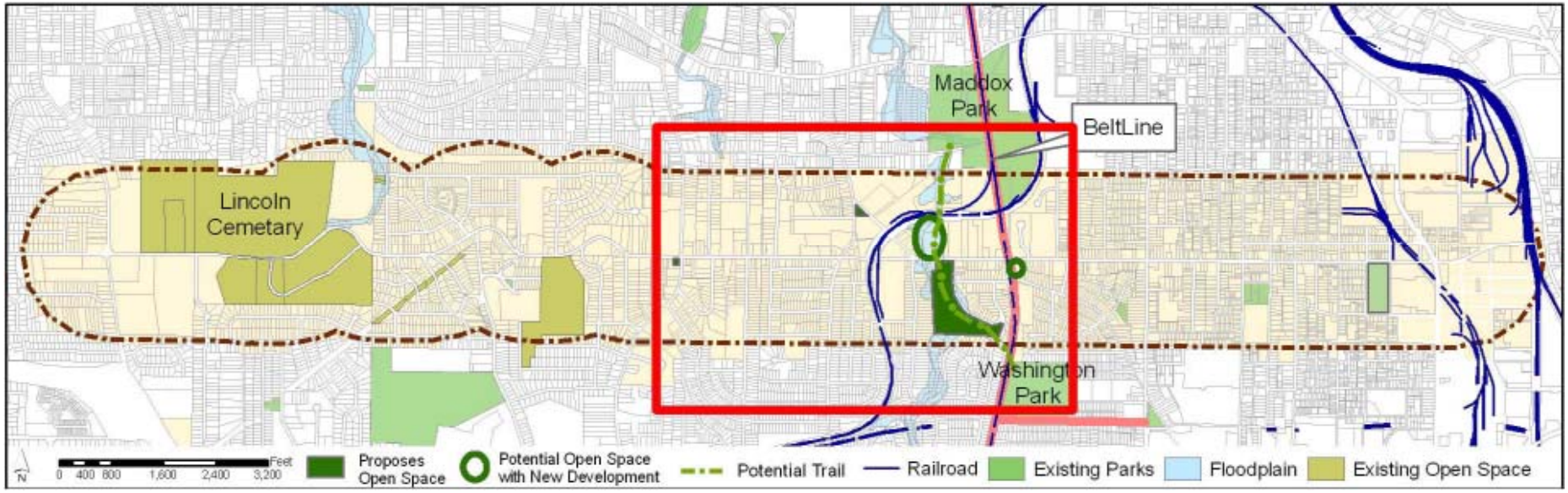


Figure 4. 16 Open Space Recommendations

5. Housing Recommendations

The redevelopment of Simpson corridor area should provide a variety of housing choices for existing and future residents. Emphasis should be put on providing workforce housing and senior housing.

Housing Policies

- Promote development of workforce and senior housing through utilizing available tools and programs:
  - Housing Urban Enterprise Zones
  - Beltline and Westside Tax Allocation Districts – 10-20% workforce housing
  - Urban Residential Finance Authority (URFA)
- Update the City Zoning code to incorporate requirement or incentives for providing workforce housing.
- Encourage housing rehabilitation and renovation by making existing Bureau of Housing programs available for study area residents and potential investors.
- Increase all Homestead Exemptions for the elderly by 15% and increase the annual net household income eligibility from $40,000 to $45,000 for all exemptions.
- Encourage development of Senior Housing (around 10% of total housing) along the Corridor within or near activity nodes

6. Economic Development Recommendations

- The major economic development policy for the Simpson corridor area is to utilize existing or potential economic development programs/tools available from the City and other agencies.

Financing Tools

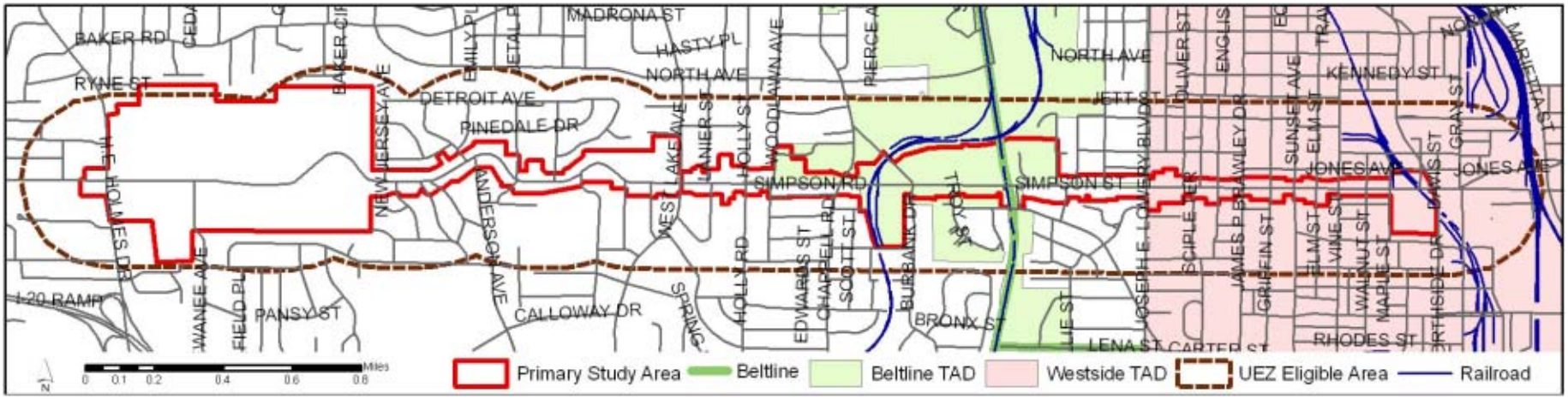
Tax Allocation Districts

The Simpson Street/Road falls into two Tax Allocation Districts (Figure 4.17)

Westside TAD: English Avenue and Vince City is located in the Westside TAD area. They are eligible to apply for the TAD neighborhood fund for neighborhood redevelopment. The neighborhood fund is 20% of the TAD increment in the entire Westside TAD area.

Beltline TAD: According to the Beltline Redevelopment Plan, the Beltline TAD will issue 14 % of the bond for affordable housing incentives and 4% of the bond for development incentives during the TAD lifetime. Simpson and Maddox Park area has been identified as one of the six priority areas identified in the draft Beltline work plan for concentration of economic development.

Figure 4. 17 Simpson Area & TADs



New Market Tax Credit

The NMTC Program is a federal initiative designed to leverage up to $15 billion of private investment from allocations of NMTC's and placed into America's most impoverished urban and rural communities. The City of Atlanta should work on utilizing this program in Economic Development Priority Areas.

Small Business Loans

The following types of Loans are available for business development in the Simpson corridor area.

Businesses Improvement Loan Fund (BILF): Provide loans up to $50,000 to encourage business revitalization

Phoenix Fund: Assist small and medium sized businesses in the City of Atlanta with affordable loans up to $100,000 for the construction or renovation of privately owned commercial buildings; equipment purchases needed to operate a business, and in some cases, working capital.

Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Debenture: ADA facilitates this program to finance small, minority and female-owned businesses to expand and/or relocate in the City.

Tax Abatements

Urban Enterprise Zones

According to SB 334, Simpson corridor area is pre-qualified for Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) designation. The UEZ will provide property tax abatement for a 10-year period for private development and redevelopment range from housing, commercial, to mixed-use which provide a certain percentage of affordable housing or add new employment.

Atlanta Renewal Community

Renewal Community (RC) program provide Tax deductions, job tax credits, and capital gains for business development in the RC area (Figure 4.18).

Commercial Revitalization Deduction

This program provides tax deduction for property owners who substantially renovate an existing building or develop a new building for commercial use within the Renewal Community.

Environmental Cleanup Cost Deduction

This program provides tax deduction for environmental cleanup in businesses development. The property does not necessarily have to be EPA brownfield site.

Renewal Community Wage Credit

Credit against Federal taxes up to $1,500 for each year of RC designation for every employee (existing and new hire) who lives and works in the RC area. Tax credit for 15% of first $10,000 in wages per employee may be taken annually through 2009. Unused credits can be carried back one year or forward for up to 20 years

Capital Gains Exclusion

Allows a 0% capital gains rate for RC assets held for a minimum of 5 years. An asset could include tangible property in the RC, stock, capital interests or profit interests in a RC Business acquired for cash.

- Besides the above existing programs, Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) is a success example around the nation that helps revitalize commercial districts. ADA can serve as the LISC in Atlanta to revitalize needed commercial districts includes areas along Simpson.
- Work with Atlanta Workforce Development Agency (AWDA) to provide new jobs to the Simpson corridor residents. TAD, UEZ can require projects providing jobs to have a certain percentage of their jobs filled by AWDA, and AWDA will train the area residents for the jobs.
- Provide Consulting and Technical Assistance for businesses through ADA's partnership with local Universities (Georgia Tech, Georgia State, and Clark Atlanta University).
- Apply Crime and Grime initiative including code enforcement in the Simpson Area to improve social environment.

Figure 4. 18 Simspon Area and Renewal Community